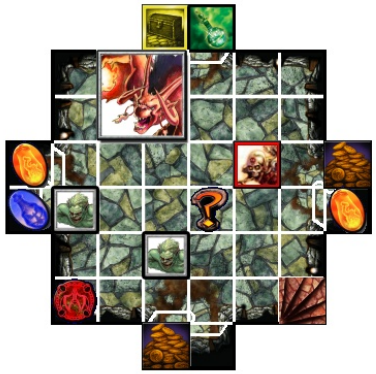
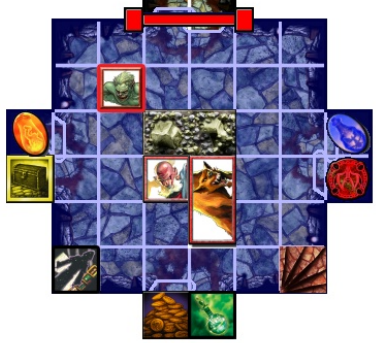
A Forgotten Realms Quest

Death Stalks in Starlit Halls--The Celestial Tower



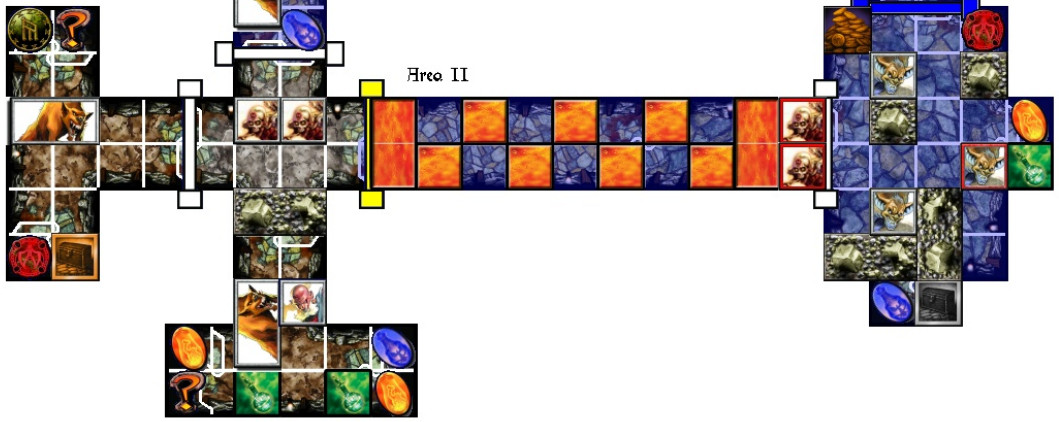
Area IV--Upper

Start Area



Area IV--Lower

Area III



Area I

Area II

Treachery

2 2 1

Chests

Copper 1: 2 Conquest Tokens, 200 coins, 1 Copper Treasure
Copper 2: 3 Conquest Tokens, 1 Copper Treasure

Silver 1: 3 Conquest Tokens, 1 Curse, 1 Silver Treasure
Silver 2: 1 Curse, 1 Silver Treasure, 300 coins

Gold 1: 1 Curse, 1 Gold Treasure, 1 Conquest Token
Gold 2: 2 Curses, 1 Gold Treasure, 1 Healing Potion, 100 coins,

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New Scenario

By Dean Morgan

Scenario Background

Death Stalks in Starlit Halls--A Forgotten Realms Quest

For two days you and your companions have been traveling through the wooded Dalelands north of the Thunder Peaks. It is late autumn, and the days grow shorter. One chill evening, the promise of the first snowfall in the air, you and your cold and weary companions see chimney smoke in the distance and can smell the comforting odor of cedar smoke in the air. A short while later you arrive in the small village of Auric's Crossing. You eagerly find a table in the local tavern, the Forlorn Wanderer, and order some spiced apple cider and honeyed ham. As you sit and listen to the sad songs of a local bard, you note a look of fear on the faces of many of the patrons. You soon learn the reason behind this strange demeanor. Of late, an odd, greenish light has been seen in the western sky, appearing after sundown over the Thunder Peaks. Many in the village and surrounding farms have been reported missing, and tales abound of the walking dead having been spotted on the edge of the village. Also, it is whispered that an ancient evil has awakened in the nearby woodland realm of Cormanthor.

As the fire grows dim and the hour late, the villagers tell you that two days ago clerics from Neverwinter passed through. The clerics, it is said, called the green light a "comet," and they appeared very concerned as to its meaning. The village council of Auric's Crossing met to discuss the strange comet. Some in the village believe the comet is a sign from the gods hearlding the end of of the age of man and the beginning of an age of death and despair, ruled over by the dark god, Cyric. The villagers recount how they sent four men of the village militia to the nearby Celestial Tower, one days ride from Auric's Crossing. The villagers explain that the Celestial Tower is an observatory where astronomers and astrologers study the heavens. The village council hoped that the academians at the Tower could provide some answers as to the mysterious green comet appearing in the night sky and the sinister disappearances. However, the men of the militia never returned, and it is widely speculated they came to an evil, unpleasant end.

The villagers, mostly poor farmers, offer you and your companions 300 coins a piece to travel to the Celestial Tower to learn the fate of their militiamen and the meaning of the comet in the sky. The villagers will pay 100 of the 300 coins up front, and the remaining 200 upon your return. You agree to help the villagers in their plight, though you don't know if it was the coin that convinced you, too much ale, or the wink of the buxom serving girl.

You and your companions head off to bed. When dawn arrives, you face a long, dangerous quest. As you blow out the candle in your room, you notice a strange, greenish light creeping across the walls. Peering out the window, you see the comet in the frosty night sky. Somewhere in the distance, a scream tears through the silence of the chill, autumn night.

Mission Goals

Explore the Celestial Tower, seeking evidence of the fate of the militiamen of Auric's Crossing. Also, learn what you can of the strange comet that has appeared in the sky and what it portends for the races of Faerun. You start with six Conquest Tokens. If you ever run out of Conquest Tokens, the demonic forces of the Celestial Tower have triumphed.

Special Instructions:

As the heroes explore the celestial tower they will begin to unravel the mystery of what happened there and how the terror that stalks the halls of the great observatory is linked to the comet that has stricken fear into the hearts of many of the races of Faerun.

Mysterious magical items are said to be hiddin within the Celestial Tower, as the heroes will soon discover. The following items are of particular interest to this quest:

The Journal of the Master Astrologer: This item is found in Area I. It details what happened to the academians of the Celestial Tower.

The Codex Celeste: This item is found in a secret room of Area I. It contains a ritual the heroes must complete prior to defeating the demon in Area IV--Upper. When the heroes find this item, one of them must take it as an "other" item (use an encounter token to represent the Codex).

The Cloak of Time and Space: This relic can be found in Area IV--Lower.

Temporal Disruptions: Whenever a hero uses a uses a glyph he is transported to the Temple of Lathander the Morninglord in Auric's Crossing. However, when a hero transports back to the Celestial Tower, he must roll 1 power die. The dark magics of the Celestial Tower have warped space and time in and around the Tower. If the hero rolls a blank result on the power die, the overlord gets to choose which glyph the hero returns on. If the hero rolls any other result besides a blank, he can choose which glyph he returns on. If a hero has at least one skill in magic, he can re-roll this die one time, but he must accept the second result.

The heroes will encounter a variety of evil creatures that now haunt the Celestial Tower. These creatures are represented by the Descent miniatures and creature cards, with the following exceptions:

Sorcerer: The sorcerers the heroes encounter are undead. They each (normal and master sorcerers) have the Undying ability. Also, these zombie sorcerers are cannabalistic. If a hero is killed by a sorcerer, the hero resurrects in the Town with one automatic wound and two poison tokens.

Hell Hound: The academians of the Celestial Tower accidentially opened a gateway to another dimension, as the heroes will soon discover. Through this gateway came lurking, shadowy, ape-like monstrocities known as Astral Stalkers. Astral Stalkers are the same as Hell Hounds, except they have the Planar Shift ability. This allows them to teleprt up to eight-spaces away as their movement during their turn. When using this ability, the Astral Stalkers can still attack (or they can attack and then Planar Shift), but they cannot move at all if they use the Planar Shift ability (meaning once they teleport, they can not move, and they cannot Planar Shift if they have previously used movement points). Planar Shift does not allow Astral Stalkers to teleport through doors or up stairs. Asatral Stalkers use the Bolt Template instead of the Breath Template. Instead of a flaming attack, they attack using a psychic blast known as Psychic Knife. This is a regular attack using the same attack dice a Hell Hound would have, but the blast template is used instead of breath, and a successful attack causes Daze.

Babau: The final enemy the heroes will face in this quest is a demon known as a Babau. This is a demonic assassin of a demon race known as the Tanar'ri. The Babau is the same as a regular demon from Descent: Journeys in the Dark, except once, on its turn, instead of moving, it can summon a Master Astral Stalker. The Babau can do this only once during the quest.

New Area

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Start Area--The Tower of the Sun

After resting and equipping your party of adventurers in Auric's Crossing, you travel into the woodland realm of Cormanthor, following the west road out of Auric's Crossing. The forest is eerily silent with wisps of fog coiling amongst the trees and gold and crimson leaves falling to the ground around you. As dusk approaches, you see the silhouette of a great tower rising over the treetops ahead of you. You have reached the Celestial Tower.

The structure is more massive than you had imagined. The "Tower" is actually several smaller towers surrounding a larger, central tower. The structure rises high into the sky, and as you marvel at the height of the structure, you notice that the gray stones of the Tower are illuminated in an eerie greenish light. Looking over the crest of the Tower, you see a green ball of flame with a glittering tail just creeping over the snowcapped peaks of the mountains to the west. A chill runs up your spine and you notice your companions are gripping their weapons tighter as you approach the dark structure.

The dirt path you have been riding on turns to gray cobbles as you near the base of the Celestial Tower. The Tower itself sits on a hilltop, adding to its height, and great, moss-covered boulders jut out of the ground at the base of the Tower, giving the appearance that the Tower rises mystically out of the landscape. In the crevices of these great boulders are collected fallen leaves of autumn, lending splashes of color to the looming, gray structure. These patches of color quickly fade, however, as the setting sun paints the horizion crimson and purple as the first stars of night twinkle into existance.

You teather your horses to a nearby hgitching post. You observe in the woods surrounding the Tower several small structures, no doubt the sleeping quarters, stables, and kitchens that served the occupants of the Tower. These buildings are of no interest to you. As you look up at the monolithic structure ruising above the trees, you see no light coming from the windows. Just as you begin to think the tower is abandoned, a blood curdling howl rips through the night. There can be little doubt that the howl, unholy and filled with menace, came from within the darkened halls of the Celestial Tower. You and your companions whisper prayers through clenched teeth and open the massive oaken door leading into the first of the smaller towers radiating from the central tower.

You enter a room with an inscription on the stone floor. The inscription reads, in the common tongue, "The Tower of the Sun." There does not appear to be an exit from this room. On the south wall of the room is a fantastic mosaic depecting the sun as a flaming chariot chasing the moon across a sky filled with caricatures of the constellations. Sitting on an ornate table in the center of this room, surrounded by worn and rolled parchments of star charts, is a black crystal ball. As you ponder this strange room, low moans sound in the dark, and two misshapen forms shamble toward you.

Encounter Marker: This represents the black crystal ball. By gazing into this item, the heroes see the sun, but close-up, as a blazing ball of fire with solar erruptions and seething fire. However, the crystal ball somehow filter's the sun's brightness, and the heroes' eyes are not affected. Closer examination of the crystal ball reveals it rests on some sort of metallic base that serves as an axis. Tell the players that the crystal ball can be rotated to the left or right. If a player rotates the sphere, the south wall of the room (represented by the stone debris marker) shifts into the wall, revealing a dim corridor beyond. Read the following:

A long, dim corridor rises before you at a sharp angle. You cautiously walk up this corridor, weapons at the ready, when you come to a wooden door with a silver image of a crescent moon adorning it. In the common tongue read the words, "Tower of the Moon," carved into the door. Suddenly there is a blinding flash of light and a sulferous smell fills your nostrils. You turn to see a lumbering black shape charging toward you.

New Area

Area I--The Tower of the Moon

As you enter the Tower of the Moon, you see a beautiful marble statue chisled into the south wall. The statue, standing nearly 20-feet in height, is of an angelic woman with outstretched arms. In her hands is a massive stone sphere. It is clear that this sphere represents the moon, and the scholars who once studied in this tower had etched a detailed map of the surface of the moon into the stone sphere. The beauty of this statue is only marred by a gaping hole where the angel's eye should be. The stout wooden door to the east has the following phrase carved on it in the common tongue: "The Tower of the Stars." This door is locked tight, but you notice that near the door handle is a deep impression in the shape of a star. There is some sort of locking mechanism visible inside this star-shaped impression, but you and your companions are unable to open the door. To the west is another door with the words, "The Master's Study" inscribed on it. As you admire the artistry of this room, two arrows whiz past your head. You duck and ready your weapon. From out of the shadows walk two men wearing the purple and silver vestments of the militia of Auric's Crossing. As you get a look at these militiamen, however, you see that their skin has been flayed from their bodies. They are now undead, walking corpses, re-animated by some dark magic. Muscle, flesh, and sinew hang from their bleached bones, and as they advance, their horrible skull faces fixed in perpetual grins, you hear the creak of bowstrings a they prepare to fire on you again.

The players must first go through the west door. The encounter token here represents the journal of the Master Astronomer of the Celestial Tower. When the heroes find this, give them one Conquest Token. Also, next to the journal they find a silver medallion shaped like a star. This is the key to open the east door from Area I to Area II. This medallion / key is represented on the map by the yellow runekey. Also, when the players open the copper chest in this area, they also find a moonstone in the chest, along with the treasures listed for that chest. By placing this stone into the eye of the angel statue (represented by the debris token in the main room), the secret room is revealed.

Area I--The Tower of the Moon--Master Astrologer's Study

You enter the master astrologer's study. Intricately carved bookcases line the walls, and a great mahogany desk sits in front of a window on the west wall. Looking out this window you see the deep woods of Cormanthor and the starry night sky. The room is dimly illuminated by candles. Along the north wall of this room is a bed and night table. A tattered journal, splattered with blood, is lying on the bed, and an ornate, silver medallion sits on the night table. This medallion is shaped like a star. Before you have a chance to examine the journal on the bed, you hear a deep growl from the shadows.

Important: The Journal of the Master Astrologer

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Read the following to the players once one of them occupies the space with the encounter marker: You hold the tattered journal up to a short, flickering candle sitting on the night table. The journal is that of a man named Gauron Dorn, the master astrologer of the Celestial Tower. Much of the journal contains the musings and observations of Master Dorn in his nightly study of the heavens and certain astrological events of importance. However, the final pages of this journal contain information important to your quest. In the final pages of the journal Master Dorn documents how he and the scholars of the Celestial Tower were good men and women; seekers of knowledge and practioneers of science and magic. Master Dorn learned, through dedicated study of his celestial maps and star charts, of an ancient comet that would be passing close to Faerun and visible in the skies for several weeks. Master Dorn consulted an ancient text, the Codex Celeste, that contained a cryptic ritual that could be performed on the eve of Highharvestide once every thousand years when the comet appeared. Though the Codex was vague on the outcome of this ritual, it promised access to vast knowledge and insights into the universe and the infinite cosmos. Hungry for such knowledge, Master Dorn and the scholars of the Celestial Tower conducted the ceremony on the eve of Highharvestide just two weeks past. Unfortunately, the ritual in the Codex Celeste was a deception of the dark god, Cyric. In frantic, nearly unreadable words, Master Dorn wrote that in the highest tower of the observatory, a gateway to another dimension was opened, and a terrible demonic assassin known as a Babau lumbered through. Unholy beings known as Astral Stalkers accompanied the Babau, and all of the scholars of the Celestial Tower were sacrificed to some greater demon by the Babau and the Astral Stalkers. The other scholars did not remain dead, however, and they rose again to scrabble, gibber, and claw at the door to Master Dorn's study where he locked himself away in fear. The final words of Master Dorn's journal read: "Now, when darkness falls and the light of Cyric's Comet washes the walls in green, only the dead stalk these halls, accompanied by the baying of blasphemous horrors from beyond. Even now they come for me. Their pounding and scratching at my door is more incessant. By Mystra, they come for me, they come...." The blood spattered pages leave little doubt as to how Master Dorn met his end.

Area I--The Tower of the Moon--Secret Room

As you insert the moonstone into the angel's eye, the whole statue begins sliding into the wall. You jump to the ground in awe as a secret room behind the statue is revealed. Beyond is a room dimly lit by smoky torches. Strange potions and elixers sit on shelves in this room, and the floor is covered by pillows surrounding a large hooka pipe. Apparently, the scholars of the Celestial Tower came into this secret room to see powerful visions and to dream strange dreams. A great tapestry hangs on the south wall, depicting the symbol of Selune, the Moonmaiden. Her symbol is that of a pair of female eyes surrounded by seven silver stars. Disturbingly, someone has painted the dark symbol of Cyric over the symbol of Selune. However, Cyric's symbol in this room, that of a jawless skull on a dark sunburst, is painted in someone's blood. Lying amongst the pillows on the west wall of this room you see a large, black, leatherbound book. On the cover of this book is an ornate depiction of Cyric's symbol as well. As you walk toward this evil tome, you hear a noise behind you, and you turn to see gleaming eyes approaching from the shadows accompanied by cackling laughter and demonic chanting.

The encounter marker in this room represents the Codex Celeste. When a hero occupies the space of the encounter marker, give the heroes one Conquest Token. One of the heroes must now carry the Codex as an "other" item (give that hero the encounter marker to represent the Codex). Advise the players as their heroes look through the tome that much of the content does not make sense. The strange Codex Celeste is filled with text that is clearly written in the tongues of demons and dragons, and ghastly drawings depict all sorts of rituals involving torture and human sacrifice. However, point out that there is a ritual described in the middle of the Codex that is called the "Lesser Banashing Ritual of the Tanar'ri," and this riutual describes the destruction of something called "The Orb of Celestial Viewing." Tell the players that this Codex looks extremely important and is probably worth keeping for the time being.

New Area

Area II--The Tower of the Stars--Lava Corridor

The silver medallion fits perfectly into the impression on the door. You hear a click and the door swings open. Suddenly, a wave of heat and smoke washes over you, and you hear the crackling and bubbling of lava pits. A long corridor stretches out before you to the east. The floor of this corridor is made up of a patchwork of cracked stone and bubbling, seething lava pits. The walls of this corridor are awash in the orange glow of the lava, and at the far end of the smoky expanse you can just make out a door leading from this inferno. However, you can also make out the silhouettes of two, dark forms moving in front of this door. In the flickering light of the lava pools, you can see that these two forms are skeletons, also dressed in the uniform of the militia of Auric's Crossing. These undead soldiers appear to be very interested in some sort of lever protruding from the wall near where they are standing.

The heroes must leap the lava pits at the beginning and end of this corridor. They can move diagonally around the lava pits in the middle areas of the corridor. However, the skeletons at the far end of the corridor are operating a lever. Each time a hero moves onto a stone space, roll one power die. If a surge is rolled, a trap is triggered. This trap causes a stone block to slide out of the wall beside the hero, pushing him into the lava. The block then slides back into the wall to be used again. The hero takes damage from the lava per the rules in Descent: the Well of Darkness. Once the hero has taken damage, he can move from the lava into any open, non-lava, adjacent space. If a hero has at least one subterfuge skill, he can re-roll this die one time each time he triggers the trap. If a hero has a skill or ability that gives him a bonus when triggering traps, this bonus may be used as well. If a hero moves multiple times in a single round, remember to roll for this trap each time the hero moves. If a hero remains stationary in a space, roll to see if he is pushed into the lava at the beginning of his turn. Keep in mind, this can be a continual process. A hero can be pushed into the lava by the stone trap. When he climbs out into an adjacent, empty space, he must now roll again to see if he is pushed back into the lava. Once both skeletons at the end of the corridor are destroyed, the trap can no longer be triggered. It should be noted that at no time during this quest can any monsters be inside this corridor except for the two skeletons. Once the two skeletons are destroyed, this corridor will remain empty of monsters. Additionally, monsters cannot be spawned in this corridor. If the heroes have passed through this corridor and the overlord spawns monsters behind them in Area I, these monsters will not pursue the heroes through the lava pits. Also, familiars are unaffected by the lava and traps.

Area II--The Tower of the Stars--Star Chamber

You cautiously open the door and peer into the room beyond. A stone chamber stretches before you. Tables and chairs are tipped over, and star charts and celestial maps are scattered across the floor. You notice several stone blocks strewn about the chamber, as well as autumn leaves. In fact, leaves are still falling from somewhere above you onto the floor. Looking up, you see that some great force has destroyed the top of the tower, and the open, starry sky is visible above you. Suddenly, the leaves on the floor swirl into the air with a rush of wind and the sound of flapping, leathery wings fills

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the air. Great, shadowy forms, white fangs gleaming in the moonlight, swoop down on you from above.

Once the master razorwing in this room is revealed, tell the players that they can see a glowing, blue key hanging around its neck from a chain. The player that deals the killing blow to this razorwing gets the blue runekey.

Area II--The Tower of Stars--Stairway

A great spiral staircase winds up the side of the tower here, rising several hundred feet from the floor. Tired and weary from your battles, you and your companions begin the slow, ascending journey in the dark

New Area

Area III--The Tower of the Spheres--Bridge

You finally reach the top of the stairs, and you exit through an ornate stone archway onto a great bridge several hundred feet above the forest below you. A chill autumn wind whips around you, and the stars overhead twinkle in the vast, black expanse of space. To the west you see the great central tower of the observatory, and through the upper windows you see flickering lights and you can hear the howls and screams of unearthly beasts. Fear fills your heart, but you must continue. You and you companions start walking toward the wooden door set in the tower wall at the far end of the bridge. Carved into this door are the words, "The Tower of the Spheres," and nine, multi-colored gems are inset into the wood of the door surrounding a faded, yellow depiction of the sun.

If the heroes want to steal these gems, give each hero 50 coins. However, also give the overlord 5 Threat Tokens and allow him to play a trap on the hero adjacent to the door who is removing the gems. The overlord can also play another trap on the door itself once the heroes open it assuming he has enough threat and an appropriate trap card to play.

Area III--The Tower of the Spheres--Central Room

You walk into a magnificient chamber with a white, marble floor. Suspended from the ceiling by chains is a massive model of the solar system, with each planet represented by a marble sphere. Gears on the east wall turn and creak, making the whole solar system model turn slowly and methodically overhead. Hovering magically in the center of this model is a glowing sphere that the red, yellow, blue, and orange planets orbit. The magical representation of the sun in this room illuminates several sinister creatures lurking toward you, and in the center of the room is a deep well. As you draw steel and prepare to fight, ghastly, slimy beings with mouths full of razor sharp fangs claw and climb their way out of this well. Their black eyes look at you with hunger and menace as they slowly advance.

New Area

Area IV--The Tower of the Void--Lower Level

Two massive oak doors lead into the next room, and written across these doors in silver script are the words, "The Tower of the Void." You enter a great stone chamber filled with all sorts of scientific and alchemical apparatus. A large stone altar sits in the center of this room, and dark, brownish stains cover its surface. Elegant statues representing gods and goddesses are set into alcoves in the walls of this room. Standing behind the altar you see a menacing figure. A mighty lich necromancer holding a great sythe stands behind the altar, stroking the muscled back of an Astral Stalker. The lich is wearing the deep blue and silver robes of a master astrologer. This undead monstrocity can be no other than Master Dorn. The evil necromancer laughs wickedly and begins to mutter the words of a spell through his mashed and decaying lips. You look around the room frantically, but you see no escape. In your heart, hope begins to fade. However, as you prepare to rush into what could be your final battle, you notice a table in the southwest corner of the room. Mysterious astronomical devices rest atop this table, and the table itself is covered with some soret of fantastic, shimmering cloth.

The object on the table in the southwest corner of the room is the Cloak of Time and Space relic.

Once Master Dorn is slain, a parchment scroll falls from his robes. Tell the players that they pick up the scroll and read it. Read the following to the players and place the red staircase token on the mapboard:

In elegant elvish script, the scroll contains a poem about the beauty of the night sky. As you read the final lines of the poem, you and your companions see a swirling, crimson mist in the far east corner of the room. The mist solidifies and becomes a great, stone staircase leading up to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

New Area

Area IV--The Tower of the Void--Observatory

You enter a large stone chamber with a metal, domed roof. Protruding theough the great dome is a gigantic telescope, operated and moved by dozens of gears and levers. In the center of the room is a mighty pedestal of twisted iron sculpted in intricate swirling patterns adorned with a massive, glass sphere. This sphere serves as the mystical viewing piece of the telescope. As you peer into the sphere you see stars and galaxies, nebula and planets, and all the vast and unknown vistas of space and time swirling past. As you and your companions approach the orb, you notice blackened, cloven hoofprints on the floor, and the smell of sulfer fills the air. An icy finger of fear creeps up your spine as a shape, black as the voids between the stars, steps into the light. The shape is that of madness and horror, a demon of the Tanar'ri; all black muscle with a horn protruding from the back of it's skull and gnashing teeth and gleaming red eyes. In those eyes is reflected all the unholy knowledge of the outer planes and darkest depths of hell. The orb begins to throb with a dull hum, and the celestial images swirling through it begin to spin faster and faster. You prepare to fight and die against this horror from beyond, and your mind nearly shatters as you stare at the terrible, demonic Babau. However, with your last, frayed ends of sanity, you recall the text of the "Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Tanar'ri" found in the "Codex Celeste." The ritual specifically mentioned destroying the

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"Orb of Celestial Viewing." Surely this great sphere in the center of the observatory could be none other that this mystical Orb.

Before the Babau can be harmed, the heroes must first destroy the Orb of Celestial Viewing represented by the encounter marker in the center of the room. The Orb has a health of 10 and an armor of 8. Of course, the Orb cannot attack, but it must be destroyed. Once the Orb is destroyed, the Babau can be harmed by the heroes' weapons. When a hero strikes the Orb, read the following:

Sparks fly from the Orb in a blue and white arc as you strike, and nearby, the unholy, seething and flaming black mass that is the Babau shrieks in pain as if struck a terrible blow.

Important: When the heroes defeat the Babau:

With a mind shattering scream, the Babau bursts into flame and is consumed. With a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, the flames swirling around the demon blink out, and you and your companions are left standing alone in the observatory. Silence fills the air, broken only by the cry of an owl heard in the distance. You and your companions, weary and shaken, move towards the mystical glyph that can transport you back to Auric's Crossing. There, you can deliver the news of what happened to their militiamen. You can also tell the villagers that the mystery of the comet has been revealed, and its sinister power has been defeated. You know, however, that though the villagers of Auric's Crossing may rest easy, the dreams of you and your companions will be haunted for many months by what you witnessed in the Celestial Tower.

The heroes gain 4 Conquest Tokens for killing the Babau. They also each receive 200 coins from the villagers of Auric's Crossing. They have finished their quest.

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